

once again introduced a resolution calling for the adoption of a SMART Security platform. SMART Security would redirect our energy and resources away from warfare and it would focus instead on nonproliferation, conflict prevention, international diplomacy, and multilateralism. That means renewing our commitment to cooperation with other nations through the United Nations and other international institutions.

SMART Security would build on the new START treaty ratified last month and move us more aggressively toward a goal of eliminating all nuclear weapons. It would rearrange our budget priorities so we are no longer throwing billions of dollars at weapons systems designed for a different era and instead invest in human capital around the world. That means addressing root causes of instability and violent conflict by increasing development aid and debt relief to poor countries.

We would be supporting programs that promote sustainable development, that promote democracy building, human rights education, a strong civil society, gender equality, education for women and girls, and much, much more.

The Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review recently completed at the State Department reaffirms the principles underlying SMART Security, calling for civilian power to lead the way in resolving conflicts and reducing threats around the world, with diplomacy and development mutually reinforcing one other; also strongly recommending a renewed focus on the rights of women and girls.

The bottom line, Mr. Speaker, is that might doesn't make right. The conventional wisdom of peace through strength does not work, especially in an era with the greatest threats we face being from nonstate actors.

A national security based on occupation and conquest has been given a chance to work over the last decade, and it has failed miserably. What we need in Afghanistan is a civilian surge, not a military surge. For the security of the American and the Afghan people, we need to be humanitarian partners, not military occupiers. It is time, Mr. Speaker, to bring our troops home and implement SMART Security principles. It is time that we do it now.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DOLD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DOLD addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

DEFENDING OUR BORDER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, in October, five Members of Con-

gress wrote to the President—myself, TED POE of Texas, RALPH HALL of Texas, PETE OLSON of Texas, and ED ROYCE of California—and we asked the President to take more steps to deal with the problems on the Texas border because people have been killed and beaten up down there. Shots have been fired across the border. And 80 miles into the country, the United States of America, we have signs telling people, warning people not to go south of there because they might be in danger from Mexican drug cartels or people across the border who are spying for the drug cartels. So there is a real problem.

Well, we didn't get an answer back from the President. And so we wrote again in November, and again we didn't get a reply. And then around the end of December, we got a reply from Homeland Security, from a fellow in Legislative Affairs, and he went through the same song and dance that they have gone through for a long time, talking about how they are solving the problem on the border.

Just recently in the last few weeks, four road workers were out there in Texas and they were working on the roads trying to fill potholes with gravel and do some other things. It was a shovel-ready project, incidentally. And they were fired at from across the border, which was about half a mile away. The bullets didn't hit any of them, but it sure scared the dickens out of them. And Mike Doyle, the chief deputy of the Hudspeth County Sheriff's Office, said that a rancher spotted a white pickup truck fleeing the area on the Mexican side after the shots were fired, and they think that the drug cartel may have been firing those shots to divert attention away from what was going on there in order to get drugs smuggled across the border.

The reason I bring all of this up once again is because we sent 17,000 National Guard troops down to deal with the oil spill in the gulf, and it was something that we should have done. We should have dealt with that problem as quickly as possible to make sure that we stopped any environmental damage that might accrue from that, and to help the people from Louisiana who were suffering, and the other border States down there. But we haven't done anything but send about 1,400 National Guard troops down to the border, or close to the border, and many of them have been withdrawn.

We have to do something to protect that 1,980-mile border between us and Mexico. Americans can't go within 80 miles of the border of Arizona and Mexico because there is a threat for their safety and security. That is something we cannot tolerate as a Nation. We have a war going on on the Mexican-American border, and we have to do whatever is necessary to protect Americans and to stop the drug trafficking coming across that border.

We did it in Colombia with Plan Colombia, and that is not on our border. That is down south of the Panama

Canal. So we really need to address this problem.

So if I were talking to the President tonight, Mr. Speaker, I would say:

Mr. President, come on, let's do what has to be done to protect our southern border. We are doing the job over in the Far East; we are doing the job over in the Middle East, and that's okay.

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Yet our border, our front yard, is threatened every single day by these drug cartels and by these terrorists coming across the border, and American ranchers and businesspeople cannot conduct their daily lives down there because there is no real security.

So, if I were talking to the President, I would say:

Mr. President, please review this issue. Don't ignore Members of Congress, five Members who wrote you, who are concerned about this issue. Don't ignore us. Do something about it, and please don't send us any more of these inane letters that really don't say anything about solving the problem. It's a real problem about the security of this country and about the people who live down there and traverse that area.

Mr. President, let's get on with it.

OCTOBER 26, 2010.

Hon. BARACK OBAMA,
President of the United States of America, the White House, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: We are writing to you today to express our extreme concern regarding the deteriorating security situation along our Nation's southern border. It seems that every day brings a new report of some atrocity; the most recent being the apparent murder of a U.S. citizen at Falcon Lake, Texas; yet little if anything appears to be being done by our government or the Mexican government to stop the bloodshed and bring the perpetrators to justice.

Protecting our borders and our citizens is a paramount responsibility of the Federal government; enshrined in the preamble of the Constitution. It would be an unforgivable breach of our constitutional responsibilities if we do not take stronger measures not only to prevent the upward spiral of violence from further spilling over into the United States and threaten the safety of U.S. citizens on American soil but to reclaim those areas of our border already overrun by smugglers and criminals. We can no longer pretend that this is simply Mexico's problem. The time has come to recognize that the drug violence along the border is a direct threat to the United States and act accordingly.

First, it has become apparent that the Mexican government and law enforcement authorities are either unwilling or unable to address this problem unilaterally. Therefore, we believe it is imperative that you immediately begin serious dialogue with President Calderon on building a comprehensive framework, in the spirit of Plan Colombia, that will better coordinate a more aggressive and proactive strategy to turn the tide of this conflict.

Second, we must complete construction of the border fence. Any responsibility we have to minimize the impact of the fence on the physical landscape or native species in the region pales in comparison when measured against the value of human lives that will be lost if we do not seal the border.

Finally, we believe it is critical that we deploy additional National Guard troops to the

border. Media reports indicate that 17,000 National Guard troops were deployed to the Gulf region to respond to the recent oil spill. Yet, you have only pledged 1,200 National Guard troops to protect the border—and according to media reports only a small fraction of those troops have arrived to date. It is unrealistic, if not pure insanity, to believe that a mere 1,200 National Guard troops, even with the support of the Border Patrol, can effectively cover the nearly 2,000 mile long Southwestern border of the United States. We must put additional bodies on the ground and we must give them the weapons and specify rules of engagement that give them the authority to do whatever is necessary to secure the border. A National Guard trooper armed with only a pistol and given no authority to engage the enemy is useless against a criminal armed with military grade weapons and ammunition.

Mr. President, we implore you to view this situation for what it is, a war and to act accordingly.

Sincerely,

DAN BURTON,
TED POE,
RALPH HALL,
PETE OLSON,
ED ROYCE,
Members of Congress.

NOVEMBER 4, 2010.

Hon. BARACK OBAMA,
President of the United States of America, the White House, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: On October 26th I and four of my colleagues, sent you a letter expressing our extreme concerns regarding the deteriorating security situation along our Nation's southern border. Since that time five more Americans have been killed along the border region. Protecting our borders and our citizens is a paramount responsibility of the Federal government; enshrined in the preamble of the Constitution. I strongly urge you to consider the proposals laid out in my letter from October 26th. Americans are dying; it is time to recognize that the drug violence along the border is a direct threat to the United States and act accordingly.

Thank you for giving your personal time and attention to this critically important issue.

[January 16, 2011]

DODGING BULLETS IN EL PASO

(By Jeannie DeAngelis)

In the ghost town of Fort Quitman, 80 miles southeast of El Paso, four U.S. road workers were up at dawn attending to "shovel ready" jobs by filling potholes with gravel. Unfortunately, "at least one Mexican gunman," who probably just wanted a chance to do jobs Americans won't do, "fired a high-powered rifle across the border," barely missing the workers.

"The bullets struck private land . . . about half a mile from the border fence." Thankfully, the quartet escaped unharmed. "Mike Doyle, Chief Deputy of the Hudspeth County Sheriff's Office, said after the fact, a rancher spotted a white pickup fleeing the area on the Mexican side at 10:30 a.m.—the time the shots were fired."

According to Doyle, "Drug cartels use this busy smuggling corridor in between the Quitman Mountains and mountains in the northwestern part of Chihuahua State to traffic marijuana and sometimes cocaine." The chief deputy explained the incident by saying: "The gunman might have shot at the road workers to distract them or get them to flee."

So in other words, criminal interlopers tried to get American workers to disperse from territory where they had every right to work and exist in order to "get them outside [the] area?"

Francisco "Quico" Canseco, R-Texas said: "It is completely unacceptable that Americans at work, doing their job in America, come under gunfire from across the border in Mexico. Our border is not secure from violence that threatens American lives. Securing our border against the cartels and their violent threat must be a top priority."

After the shooting, two Texas Rangers and Hudspeth County Sheriff Arvin West and Chief Deputy Doyle were at the scene looking for the bullets with a metal detector, which when weighed against the alternatives is preferable to a medical examiner digging bullets out of heads.

"The U.S. government built narrowly spaced steel poles north of the Rio Grande to fence the border in that West Texas area. The slots are not wide enough for people to cross, but small objects can fit between the 15-foot-tall poles." Thus, the lone gunman must have been dedicated to scattering the workers because nothing deterred his squeezing the gun barrel through or shooting off the bullets.

This particular shot across the border initiated Hudspeth County into an elite group. "In El Paso, stray bullets from a drug-related gunfight hit City Hall in June. Another stray bullet struck a University of Texas at El Paso building in August." And to date, newlywed David Hartley's body has yet to be recovered after being shot by Mexican gunmen on Falcon Lake, a border area near Laredo, Texas.

After the bullets missed the U.S. four workers, the men were escorted away from the scene, which successfully accomplished the original intent of the shooter: Disperse the crowd and clear the area so as to drive unhindered right on through to Texas. Moreover, and much to the relief of the high-powered rifleman, Border Patrol spokesman Bill Brooks assured drug- and gun-runners, as well as marauding banditos with high-powered rifles, that Border Patrol does not plan to deploy additional agents to the area. Brooks vowed: "There is no beefing up in any way."

Governor Rick Perry's spokeswoman, Katherine Cesinger, said that "If these reports are true, it is yet another incident of border violence and spillover. It goes back to the need for the federal government to provide more resources to the border, which is certainly feeling the effects of the escalating violence in Mexico."

Nevertheless, not all is lost. Texas could follow Arizona, a state that recently chose to address violent behavior by distributing "Together we Thrive" tee shirts.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

IN SUPPORT OF THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, we are having debates about health care because Americans are nervous about changing something so important to their families, and that, of course, makes politicians nervous about reform.

This skepticism is understandable. Attempting to adjust policies and programs that comprise now 17 percent of

our economy, the biggest driver of the Federal deficit that literally touches every American family, poses daunting challenges. Yet, as people begin the analysis, the appropriate comparison is not some idealized, magical state but the comparison to the path we are on, which everybody agrees is unsustainable.

Medical costs, left unchecked, will literally bankrupt the country. The Department of Defense will spend more on health care this year than China uses to run its entire military operation for 7 months. Every objective, independent expert acknowledges and laments the fact that the United States is the world's health care underachiever. We pay more for health care than our major allies and competitors in Europe, Japan, and Canada, but our people get sick more often; they die sooner, and unlike any other country, people are bankrupted by medical costs—about 2,000 people per day. All the while, we have a record number of uninsured Americans—now over 50 million.

Sadly, we are getting exactly what we paid for: more procedures, multiple providers, an emphasis on specialty care rather than someone who can help us with our own efforts to negotiate this complex, fragmented health care system. America actually spends more administering our health insurance system and finding ways to deny care than any other country in the world spends on providing care.

Starting from scratch, we could give better care for less money, but we are not starting from scratch. We are starting with an economic and structural behemoth, encompassing, as I said, 17 percent of the economy. It is the largest employer in most communities, and it has evolved over two-thirds of a century of public and private investment and government legislation. Today, our hybrid system is largely administered through hundreds of agencies, programs, and large providers, with the Federal Government paying half the bill directly.

The good news is that we have proven that we can get better results for less than we are spending, and the health care reform legislation provides this framework. First, we don't need more money. In fact, if we implement the existing legislation, it can be a source of savings in the future.

The good news is we don't have to deal with unproven techniques or technologies. We know what to do. We don't even have to look at foreign models that are more successful than ours. We can look right here in the United States. My community of Portland, Oregon, delivers better health care for Medicare, for instance, to its recipients than other communities where costs are twice as high. It's not just Portland. This can be found in areas in the